

City of Seat Pleasant – Request for Proposals for Attorney Services



All proposals due on or before 5:00 p.m. on November 2, 2011 (This deadline applies to hard copies and electronic submissions)

The City of Seat Pleasant

I. Introduction

The City is soliciting the interest of qualified professional law firms or individuals to provide a full range of municipal legal services serving as the City's legal counsel on a part-time contractual basis. The City of Seat Pleasant has approximately 5,000 residents with an annual operating budget of approximately \$3.8 million dollars and 35 employees.

II. Community Profile

Seat Pleasant is a friendly community located just over the District of Columbia line at its northeast corner. The site is part of what had been the Williams-Berry estate until the descendants of General Otho Holland Williams, a Revolutionary War hero, and James Berry, a mid-17th-century Puritan leader, sold it to Joseph Gregory in 1850. Designers of the Chesapeake Beach Railway, constructed in 1897–99 between Washington and Chesapeake Beach in Calvert County, located their first station in Maryland (or last, depending on the direction of travel) on the railway's right-of-way that traversed the Gregory property. They called the station District Line. In 1906, the growing number of residents in the area around the station adopted a more imaginative name for their community— Seat Pleasant, after the early Williams-Berry estate.

Steady growth of traffic on the Chesapeake Beach Railway between 1900 and its peak in 1920 translated into steady development for Seat Pleasant. When the community was incorporated as a city in 1931, it had a school, water company, sewer connections courtesy of the District of Columbia's sanitary system, and reliable fire protection by the Seat Pleasant Fire and Community Welfare Association. But by that time, the railroad had been in steady decline for ten years, and in 1935 it ceased operations. The cause of its demise—highway construction— was in clear evidence in Seat Pleasant. The city gained two state highways running through it— Maryland Route 704 (now called Martin Luther King Highway and previously named George Palmer Highway after a banker and community leader) and Maryland Route 214 (Central Avenue).

With highway construction, came further expansion for Seat Pleasant. Construction of "affordable" housing, notably the Gregory Estates apartments in 1949, was the catalyst for the migration of African-American families from the District of Columbia. In the 1980s, the old Chesapeake Beach Railroad roundhouse and turntable were demolished to make room for the Addison Plaza Shopping Center on Central Avenue.

Like Watkins Hardware Store, which was a fixture in Seat Pleasant from the early 1900s until it finally closed in the mid 1990s; most of the testaments to the city's past are long gone. Two that remain are the Episcopal Addison Chapel (1696) and Mount Victory Baptist Church (1908). Goodwin Park, named after a former mayor, is the town's most prominent location.

III. Organization

The City of Seat Pleasant is governed by an elected City Council and Mayor and a City Administrator chosen by the City Council to implement programs and run the day-to-day operations of the City. This form of government combines the voice of citizens through the Mayor and Council with the professional training of an Administrator.

The City of Seat Pleasant consists of following departments:

Office of the City Administrator

The City Administrator directs and coordinates the general administration of the City government, which includes preparation of the annual budget. The Office of the City Administrator provides management and administrative support for operating departments, programs, and initiatives established by the Mayor and Council. The City Administrator coordinates the enforcement and execution of laws and ordinances of the City.

Community Services

The Community Services Department coordinates outreach and engagement activities throughout the community. This Department connects residents with services, engages residents in multicultural, educational, and volunteer initiatives, communicates and promotes City events and activities, and fosters collaboration and involvement.

Finance

The Finance Department activities and responsibilities include the receipt and disbursement of City Funds, financial reporting, investment of idle funds, control of fixed assets, collection of taxes and assessments for special projects, and assisting all departments in securing supplies, materials, equipment and services. Duties also include assisting the Mayor and City Administrator in preparation of the annual budget.

Police

The Seat Pleasant Police Department is a law enforcement agency that shares responsibility with the Prince George's County Police Department, providing coverage 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Department operates under the philosophy of community policing and utilizes a problem-solving approach to address patterns of criminal and traffic issues. This includes the Code Enforcement and Nuisance and Abatement Office.

Public Works

The Public Works Department provides a variety of services such as snow removal, street sweeping, repair and maintenance of streets, sidewalks, and storm drains, beautification of the City's streets, public buildings, and parks, recycling, and city vehicle maintenance. The Department is in charge of maintaining all City facilities including custodial services, repairs, supervision of construction, and service contracts of all major equipment.

IV. Scope of Services

The scope of services requires attendance at City Council meetings and other City meetings, as needed. The City's Counsel is expected to conduct research, provide recommendations, legal opinions, as well as, consult with staff or officials of the City, as requested by the City Administrator. Preparation and review of contracts, ordinances, policies and other municipal matters will also be required.

It is anticipated that the period of the contract will be one year, with annual renewals. The City retains the right to solicit other proposals for legal services every twelve months, or as needed for a specific project after the initial contract period or if legal service needs change substantially.

Each attorney in the proposed team must possess a Juris Doctorate degree and have graduated from a law school accredited by the American Bar Association. Each attorney in the proposed team must be a member in good standing of the Maryland Bar Association.

Additionally, assigned Counsel must be a member of the bar of the Maryland Court of Appeals.

The proposed designated City Attorney must have a minimum of five years experience in the field of municipal law, preferably with some land use and public works construction experience.

V. Selection Process

The selection committee will review all proposals and may invite the most qualified firms to an interview. In reviewing and evaluating the submitted proposals and interviews, the selection committee will use the following criteria:

1. Understanding of municipal government issues and municipal law, availability, references, and billing rates of person serving as the City's contracted attorney
2. Familiarity with State of Maryland Land Use Law
3. Proposed fee structure – Propose a compensation package, inclusive of all service costs. The City is open to a variety of approaches, including hourly rates or a flat, monthly rate with add-ons. The City will select the finalists by considering the proposed compensation as a "best and final offer," although the City reserves the right to negotiate terms as needed to improve elements of the proposal to best meet the needs of the City, including costs.
4. Qualifications of the key staff that will be assigned to the City (Indicate their assigned role, amount of time available, past relevant experience and resume, etc. Include a rate schedule for all assigned staff. Please address experience in municipal government legal services.).
5. Names of references, including contact person and telephone numbers of up to three organizations for which the firm has provided similar services
6. Number of copies: 6

Submittals will be narrowed to a short list that may be asked to participate in interviews. The City will review and evaluate each statement of qualifications on the basis of:

1. Demonstrated understanding of municipal government issues and law to include but not limited to: election law, annexations, public finances, contracts, and human resources
2. Proposed fee structure
3. Qualifications of assigned counsel and other staffing resources – Assigned Counsel must be a member of the bar of the Maryland Court of Appeals.
4. Availability of assigned counsel to attend meetings and otherwise serve the City of Seat Pleasant
5. Results of references

The City reserves the right to modify the selection criteria.

Upon selection of the firm, the fee and contract will be negotiated with the City Administrator and approved by the City Council.

VI. Terms and Conditions

Not all respondents may be interviewed. The respondents shall be responsible for the accuracy of the information supplied. The City of Seat Pleasant reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to issue one or more agreement(s) for the intended scope of services, to waive minor irregularities, issue additional purchasing invitations, to retain existing Counsel, and to either substantially modify or discontinue the selection process prior to award of a contract.

The City reserves the right to negotiate all elements which comprise the apparent successful proposal to ensure that the best possible consideration is afforded to all concerned. Nothing contained herein shall require the City of Seat Pleasant to award a contract and the City of Seat Pleasant reserves the right to determine its own selection criteria in the award of the final agreement. The contract resulting from acceptance of a proposal by the City shall be in form supplied or approved by the City. The City of Seat Pleasant shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by the firm in preparing, submitting, or presenting its response to the City.

VII. Schedule (Subject to change)

The City will make every effort to follow this timetable; however, we reserve the right to modify the proposal process and dates as necessary:

RFP Released	October 10, 2011
Deadline for Submittal of Proposals	November 2, 2011
Possible Interviews	Week of November 7-11, 2011
Firm Selected	Week of November 14-18, 2011

VIII. Proposal Deadline

Six (6) copies of the response materials shall be submitted on or before 5:00 p.m. on November 2, 2011 (This deadline applies to hard copies and electronic submissions) to:

Vincent Jones, City Administrator
vincent.jones@seatpleasantmd.gov

City of Seat Pleasant
6301 Addison Road
Seat Pleasant, MD 20743
(P) 301-336-2600

Questions concerning this request should be submitted in writing to Kyrthlyn Rhoda, Administrative Assistant, and received by 5:00 p.m., October 25, 2011 at the address above. Email questions will be accepted at kyrthlyn.rhoda@seatpleasantmd.gov.

Late submissions, faxes or proposals that are not written will not be accepted. Electronic proposals may be submitted via email, but the City of Seat Pleasant assumes no responsibility for formatting or transmission errors.